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Helping Organizations Retain Their Most Valuable Asset

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Study Strategies for School Success

These study strategies are fundamental for all ages.

- Beat procrastination! Teach your child, by example, not to put off tasks.
- Instead of denying your child privileges for not studying, offer him rewards or incentives for getting his schoolwork done.
- Get organized! Ensure that your child has separate sections in her notebook for notes, homework, and graded materials for each class.
- After class or in the evenings, encourage your child to write a review of key ideas from each class.
- Teach your child to be an active reader who outlines and annotates her textbooks. If she is not allowed to write in her books have her keep these notes in a special notebook.
- Encourage him to read through textbook sections before they're reviewed in class.
- When studying for a test, suggest that your child arrange class and reading notes chronologically to ensure she's studying the appropriate material.
- Help him create "fact sheets" of key ideas and terms scattered randomly on a page. If he can recall details in random order, they're stored in his brain.
- A combination of memorization and concept comprehension will yield the longest-lasting and most complete knowledge.

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Making the Daily Switch From Job Stress to Family Connection

Is it difficult for you sometimes at night to be fully present and calm when your mate or your kids want to talk with you (because you've got work stress and unfinished business racing through your mind)?

Do you ever find yourself becoming impatient or saying "Get to the point already" right at the moment when your loved ones need you to be an excellent, patient listener?

Do you sometimes get into an argument with your long-term partner or your kids because they accuse you of not caring or not listening, when in fact you're just exhausted from the pressures of your job?

"You are not alone," says Leonard Felder, Ph.D., author of *WAKE UP OR BREAK UP: 8 Crucial Steps to Strengthening Your Relationship* (Rodale, 2005). Felder has been counseling couples for over 20 years and he has found, "Those first few minutes when you walk in the door and get bombarded by screaming kids, an exhausted partner, or a series of domestic problems, are a 'make-or-break moment' for most relationships. If you can find quick, effective ways to shift from the pressures of the work-day so you can be fully present with your loved ones, your home life will be a lot less argumentative and a lot more loving."

The Five Indications That Your Work Stress is Affecting Your Home Life

Felder warns of five specific signals that the quality of your primary relationship, or your precious time with your kids, are being jeopardized by the pressures that accompany you home each night from work.

These five signals are:

1. If you are so tired from work that you don't feel like talking to your loved ones and your only response to "How was your day" tends to be "I don't want to talk about it."
2. If you unintentionally sound or look like an impatient boss at home who says to your loved ones things like "Cut to the chase," "Get to the point," "Can't you see I'm busy right now," or "I've got too much on my mind—just let me be."
3. If you feel irritated or unable to concentrate on your loved one's stories about the day, or your kids' questions, because you only want to numb out in front of the television, the computer, the videogames, or the snack food.
4. If you notice that you're far more concerned about some office politics that got on your nerves recently, but you have little interest in your family's activities, their inner lives, or the developmental leaps and daily struggles your kids are having.
5. If you discover that your mate would rather talk to someone else (a therapist, a friend, or even a current flirtation) than to confide in you -- even though the two of you once prided yourselves on being terrific best friends and loyal confidantes.

How to Decompress Quickly Each Night

Felder describes three specific things you can do to make the important shift from the impatient "Get to the point" tone of voice that is normal at work, so you can truly arrive at the patient "I'm here for you" closeness your mate and your kids need and deserve each night from you. Tremendous improvements in strained relationships can occur if you make sure to do the following each night:

1. THE CENTERING TIME OUT Five or ten minutes before you walk into your home, give yourself a much-needed time out. Stop the car a block away from your home. Or close your eyes on the bus, train, or subway to find a moment of serenity. Then take a few moments to breathe, pray, meditate, or talk silently to yourself about the fact that the people you are about to meet in a few minutes (your mate and/or your kids) are more important than any client, customer, supplier, boss, or work colleague you've dealt with all day. Even if your work-focused brain wants to take your loved ones for granted, this is the moment when you can once again realize they are the most important people in your life right now.

2. THE PROMISE Felder suggests making a daily promise to yourself that "Instead of being an impatient, grumpy, or bossy creep when I walk in the door, tonight I'm going to be the caring, interested, and relaxed partner or parent these loved ones deserve. Tonight instead of tuning out my loved ones or having a short fuse, I'm going to be fully present." You might even ask in a silent prayer or meditation for support and strength to make your promise come true during the next few hours with your loved ones.

3. THE CHANCE FOR EACH PARTNER TO HAVE A TURN Finally, when you sit down to talk with your spouse or your long-time partner, set some guidelines that will allow the two of you to have a good check-in conversation. For example, Felder recommends, "Instead of having one person go into a 60 minute monologue where the other person is struggling not to tune out or interrupt, it's much more effective to say ahead of time you're a bit tired tonight and you do have ten or fifteen minutes of good listening left in you. That proactive

statement clues your partner in that if the two of you take turns (10-15 minutes for each partner to check in about his or her day), then both of you will have a chance to be heard and understood each night no matter how stressful your days have been. This guideline of "ten minutes for each person so we both get a turn" is a remarkable way to restore balance and closeness in your relationship.

Based on what he's seen in hundreds of counseling cases, Felder recommends, "If you don't take proactive steps to deal with the day's stressfulness and you just go on automatic pilot each night, your tiredness and grumpiness will start to cause your loved ones to feel distant from you. Even if it's not your intention to snap at your loved ones, unless you take immediate action to break the pattern of nightly impatience and tuning out, they will begin to withdraw from you emotionally."

On the other hand, Felder has found, "These three preventive steps can make a huge difference in the quality of your home life: the time-out prior to walking in the door, the promise you make to yourself to be fully present, and the guidelines you set with your primary partner so that neither of you overloads the other with too much information on a given night. Just by doing these three positive steps you will once again become the kind of mate and co-parent that will cause your partner and your kids to say, "Wow, it's so good to have you back again!"

Recommended Reading:

WAKE UP OR BREAK UP: 8 Crucial Steps to Strengthening Your Relationship, by Leonard Felder, Ph.D., includes several other practical and easy-to-use methods to put renewed passion, teamwork, and closeness back into a long-term relationship, even when you have stressful or busy lives. For more information, log onto www.wakeuporbreakup.com.



Exercise is a critical component for maintaining weight

Did you know that the average person gains a pound a year between the ages of 25 to 55 and that people who tend to be heavy gain even more? Several recent studies, however, have shown that people can maintain their weight with moderate exercise.

A recent study conducted at Duke University divided 120 sedentary adults – all overweight to mildly obese – into four groups. The first group did no exercise. The second group walked briskly for 30 minutes a day, the caloric equivalent of 11 miles a week. The third group jogged for 20 minutes a day, also the caloric equivalent of 11 miles a week. The fourth group jogged for 30 minutes a day, or 17 miles a week. The study participants were told not to change their eating habits during the eight-month study.

At the study's conclusion, 73% of the participants in the two groups who logged the equivalent of 11 miles a week either maintained their weight or lost up to three pounds. Those in the most vigorous exercise group lost an average of six pounds each. The control group, the group who did no exercise, gained an average of 2.4 pounds in six months.

This study and other similar studies illustrate that regular, moderate exercise helps maintain body weight by burning excess calories. Those on track to gain one pound per year are taking in an average of only 10 calories a day too many, an amount that can easily be offset by a brisk daily walk.

HMS is here to help

If you need help with issues related to overeating or being overweight, contact Human Management Services (HMS) for confidential counseling, referrals or information. Remember, HMS is always available to help you or your immediate family members with any type of personal, family or work-related concern. Why not call an HMS counselor today? We're here to help!

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EMPLOYER FOR YOU AND
YOUR DEPENDENTS**

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24 Hours a day: 800-343-2186

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